



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
*Milwaukee County*  
CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**For Immediate Release:**

DATE: March 1, 2017

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## **County Executive Abele Announces Launch of Additional Public Hearings, Online Feedback for BHD**

*Goal is to increase public involvement and diversity of ideas to shape BHD budget*

**MILWAUKEE** – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele today announced that the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division (BHD) is expanding the number of ways the public can provide input on the organization's 2018 budget. These include public comment and online feedback opportunities.

"It's important to hear from the public as we make decisions about how to spend taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively," County Executive Chris Abele said. "Last year, I made it a priority to expand the ways the public could provide feedback and input on the overall County budget and will do so again this year, beginning with BHD offering additional opportunities to hear from the community. The reason we were able to begin our transformation of mental health care in Milwaukee County is because we had the broad support of the community and 121 state legislators representing both political parties. In order to continue on our path of turning that system into a national model, we must keep the community engaged and informed."

"Educating the public about BHD's work and hearing their thoughts about needed behavioral health programs and services in Milwaukee County are priorities to the Mental Health Board and BHD administration," says Duncan Shrout, chair of the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board, the governing body for the Behavioral Health Division. "We believe by expanding opportunities for public comment, BHD will be able to share more information with the public, and make it possible for more people to contribute their ideas."

The Behavioral Health Division has scheduled three public comment hearings between March and June 2017, and may add a fourth before the Mental Health Board presents the approved 2018 BHD budget to County Executive Chris Abele in July. The scheduled public comment hearings include:

- **March 23, 2017: 4:30 pm Washington Park Senior Center 4420 W Vliet St, Milwaukee, WI 53208**
  - Public hearing on the 2018 BHD budget with the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board
  - Public comment from this hearing will shape budget documents the public will see later in the process. At this first hearing, BHD will not have a budget for the public to view
- **June 7, 2017: 2:30 p.m. Mental Health Complex 9455 W. Watertown Plank Road Conference Room 1045.**
  - BHD presents its preliminary budget to the Mental Health Board Finance Committee, including a high level overview of progress and budget assumptions
  - Public comment is welcome
- **June 29, 2017: 2:30 p.m. Mental Health Complex 9455 W. Watertown Plank Road Conference Room 1045**
  - The DHHS director presents the budget to the Mental Health Board Finance Committee for a vote
  - Public comment is welcome

“We welcome constructive input from our public. As an organization transforming to become a national best practice leader in behavioral health, BHD must be responsive to the needs of our community. Public feedback on our budget plays big role in this,” says Mike Lappen, BHD’s administrator. “Thanks to public comment last year, BHD expanded crisis resource hours, added crisis mobile teams, and expanded Comprehensive Community Services (CCS).”

Public comment hearings for BHD’s 2018 budget will take place with the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board. Only feedback on the budget will be heard. General comment on the Behavioral Health Division can be provided at BHD’s next general comment session in September 2017. The BHD budget process follows the [Milwaukee County budget process](#), with one addition: BHD’s budget must be approved by the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board in July. This is why BHD begins its budget process in March.

In addition to these public comment hearings, BHD has created a new web page with information about the budget process, tips on how to prepare public comment and an online feedback form for individuals who unable to attend in person. Visit the website [here](#).

### **About the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board**

The Milwaukee County Mental Health Board (MHB) was established in 2014 through Wisconsin Act 203. The board is made up of 13 members and includes mental health professionals, consumers and advocates. The MHB is responsible for setting policy for the Behavioral Health Division.

### **About the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division**

The Behavioral Health Division provides care and treatment to adults, children, and adolescents with mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual disabilities through both County-operated programs and contracts with community agencies. Services include intensive short-term treatment

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through our crisis services and inpatient services, as well as a full array of supportive community services for persons with serious mental illness and substance use disorders.

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